

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 14643 171340Z

65

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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P 171257Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8796

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 14643

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, YO

SUBJECT: TENUOUS REPORT ON TITO DEATH

REF: A) BELGRADE 6080, B) STATE 229662

1. THE ERRONEOUS REPORT OF TITO DEATH PROBABLY DID NOT STEM FROM SOVIET DISINFORMATION, BUT FROM GARBLED VERSION OF INFORMAL INQUIRY BY EMBOFF TO U.S. WIRE SERVICES AS TO WHETHER ANY NEWS OF TITO'S DEATH

HAD BEEN CARRIED ON PRESS WIRE.

2. FULL BACKGROUND IS AS FOLLOWS: EMBOFF CALLED YUGOSLAV CEMA MINISTER RAKIC WHO HAD JUST RETURNED FROM BELGRADE, TO SUGGEST LUNCHEON ENGAGEMENT. RAKIC, WHO IS NORMALLY CALM INDIVIDUAL, APPEARED TO BE IN STATE OF EXTREME MENTAL AGITATION. HE STATED THAT THE NEWS WAS VERY BAD, HIS "CHIEF" HAD JUST DIED AND HE WAS RETURNING TO BELGRADE "IMMEDIATELY". AS EMBOFF WAS EXPRESSING CONDOLENCE ON THIS NEWS, RAKIC TERMINATED CONVERSATION. PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF SPECULATION ABOUT TITO'S HEALTH IN LIGHT OF GISCARD VISIT, EMBOFF INFERRED THAT RAKIC MIGHT BE REFERRING TO TITO'S DEATH. WHEN I WAS INFORMED OF THIS CONVERSATION, I ASKED THAT PRESS WIRES BE CHECKED, AND IF THERE HAD BEEN ANNOUNCEMENT OF TITO'S DEATH THAT YUGOSLAV EMBASSY BE CONTACTED AT WORKING LEVEL TO ASCERTAIN PLANS FOR CONDOLENCE BOOK. WIRE SERVICE REPRESENT-
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TATIVES OF COURSE INFORMED US THAT THEY HAD SEEN NO REPORTS OF

TITO'S DEATH, AND WE SOON DETERMINED THAT PERSON WHO HAD DIED
WAS ACTUALLY YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR TO CEMA IN MOSCOW.

3. MOST PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION OF REUTERS REPORTS IS THAT ONE
OF THEIR LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS (WITH WHOM EMBASSY WAS NOT IN
CONTACT) RECEIVED GARBLED VERSION OF EMBOFF'S QUERY TO U.S.
WIRE SERVICES.
MATLOCK

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 17 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Event:
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Disposition Reason:
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